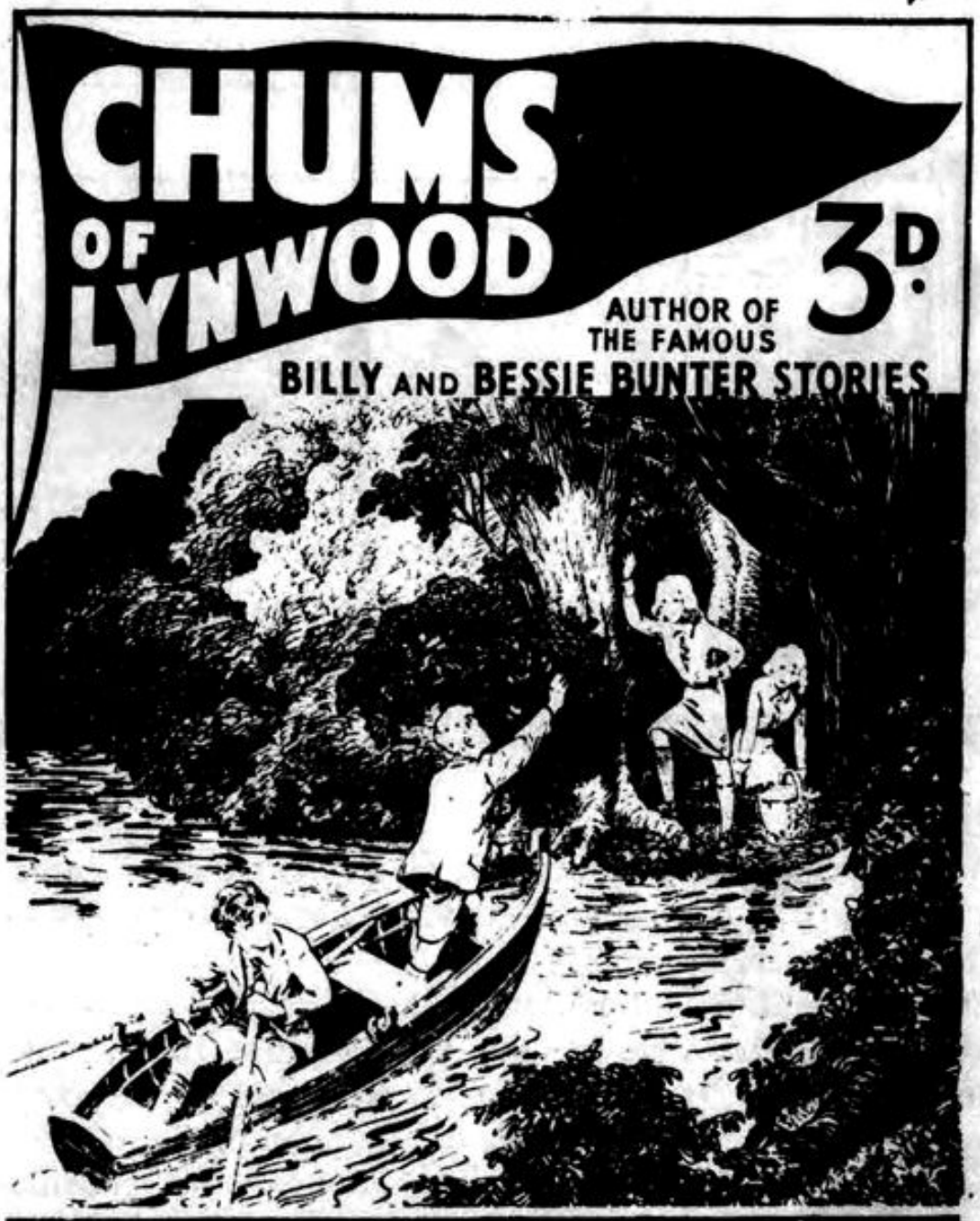
STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 26 Nº 308 AUGUST 1972



15p EXCITING BOYS & GIRLS STORIES 15p

STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR
Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST
Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

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FROM LIFE

We have commented before that all was grist which came to the story-writer's mill. Anyone who can write finds no difficulty in writing. It is the themes which are elusive.

Charles Hamilton's most famous essay based so closely on a real life case that it is impossible to miss the connection, was in the Magnet of the summer of 1911, in the two stories "Driven From School" and "A Schoolboy's Honour." These stories were, veritably, a re-write of the real-life Archer-Shee case. One wonders whether the schoolboys of that day found the connection as clear as it was to us who came on the stories later on.

It is a long time since I read the facts of the Archer-Shee case

which was finally settled in 1910, but I fancy that Archer-Shee received compensation on the grounds that the evidence had been circumstantial and that he should never have been regarded as guilty on the basis of such evidence. Hamilton, of course, added to the story, and made it a plot in which a boy named Heath wore a flaxen wig to impersonate Bob Cherry.

Some time ago I referred to the Wallace case, which John Rhode used for his story "The Telephone Call." Wallace's sentence was quashed by the appeal court, on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Rhode, in his fiction, produced a new character guilty of the murder.

Last month, in our Blakiana column, one of our contributors discussed a Union Jack story based on the Oscar Slater affair. Some years ago, Shelley Smith, one of the best writers of psychological thrillers, produced "The Woman in the Sea," which was the real-life Rattenbury-Stoner case fictionised. No doubt there have been plenty of others.

Does the same thing happen in reverse? From time to time it has been suggested that real-life criminals have put into action some of the plots they have read in books. It seems likely, for, as we well know, the books we read had considerable influence upon us when we were children. Fortunately for us, the influence of the stories we read and remember was good. Social workers believed long ago that films had a great influence on young people. I rather doubt whether the films we saw seemed so real to us as the books we read. All the same, I believe that television has a strong influence on the young today, and not always for the best. Swearing and immorality and violence are made so commonplace in T. V. programmes that young people who wallow in these programmes can hardly escape having it rub off on them.

Remarkable indeed was the connection of a recent poisoning case with Agatha Christie's "The Pale Horse." When I read the first reports of the case, I was reminded at once of the Christie novel. Later on, one of the witnesses stated that he was first put on the track of what was happening by his memories of "The Pale Horse." There was, I think, no suggestion that the killer had been influenced in any way by the novel.

DAN

In fairly recent months we have seen on B. B. C. television two

remarkably fine films - "Robinson Crusoe," surely the best version ever made of the famous story, and "Home Before Dark." These films are, naturally, not very new, and, as films go, are probably all the more entertaining for that fact. They are noteworthy for two exceptionally fine performances by the famous actor, Dan O'Herlihy.

Apart from his great versatility and power as an actor, Dan has a further point of appeal for all of us. He has long been a collector of the old papers, and for very many years has been one of the most enthusiastic readers of this magazine. Hats off to Dan. May he go still further in his already greatly distinguished career.

THE RICHARDS' LETTERS

Last month I commented on the number of letters from Frank Richards which have been kindly loaned to me by many readers. I was then debating whether or not to publish them.

I have now decided to go ahead with the publication of a booklet containing the most interesting of the collection. They give a vivid picture of the famous author's views and attitudes, and some of them give an insight into a few of the things which happened in the past. We have touched on all or most of these items down the years, but I think that readers will be pleased to have them collected into one souvenir booklet.

It will take some months to get it all prepared, but I hope to be able to offer the booklet to readers in the late autumn. So further news on this little project later.

THE ANNUAL

Next month we shall be sending you the order form for the 1972 edition - the 26th - of Collectors' Digest Annual. I hope in September to find space to tell you of some of the exceptional articles and items which the new Annual will contain.

(The famous signature in the Companion Papers when Hinton was king.)

DANNY'S DIARY

AUGUST 1922

The Rookwood holiday series has gone on through the month in the Boys' Friend. Jimmy Silver and Co. are walking in company with Mr. Richards' horse and trap. The horse is named Trotsky. In "Rookwooders on the Road" they find they have a stowaway in the trap - Tubby Muffin. Next week, in "Fortune Favours the Brave," the chums cross swords with a farmer, Mr. Pudsey. But they save the farmer's daughter from a watery grave, so they become welcome visitors at the farmhouse. Then, in "Washed Out," they camp out on the sands of the Kentish coast, and wake up to find the tide has come in. Last of the month is "Rough on the Rookwooders." They meet up with Mornington, who was expelled from Rookwood last term. They also clash with Morny's family, the Stacpooles. This very pleasant holiday series continues next month.

One of the five new Sexton Blake Libraries this month is "The Red Domino," partly set on the French Riviera. It is a fine tale, introducing Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie. One of the five Boys' Friend Libraries is "Young Yardley," a story of the Australian cricketers in England, by Richard Randolph.

Lord Northcliffe has died. He started the Daily Mail in the year 1896. And eight people have died of botulism after eating potted meat sandwiches in a hotel near Gairloch.

There have been some good pictures in the local cinemas. We saw one of my favourite stars Charles Ray in "An Old-Fashioned Boy;" Mary Pickford in "Poor Little Peppina;" Nazimova in "Camille;" Douglas Fairbanks in "The Mollycoddle" and Jackie Coogan in "My Boy."

The thrilling holiday series in the Magnet, which started last month, has continued through August and now ended. Mauleverer has taken his friends on a yachting cruise aboard the "Silver Scud." But a villain with a big nose, Gideon Gaunt, is threatening that Mauly will be killed unless £10,000 is paid. The peril should be left behind when the ship sails, but it isn't. There are some jolly and exciting adventures round the coast, but Harry Wharton suspects the mate, Edgar Poynings.

And in the final tale, Wharton causes Poynings, with his false nose, to betray himself. Of course, we really guessed most of the time that the scoundrel would turn out to be Poynings, but it has been a good series. This month's tales were "The Mysterious Foe," "The Schoolboy Yachtsmen," "The Mystery of the Silver Scud," and "The Terror Tracked Down."

On 21st August there was a nasty railway accident at Gravesend. There was a collision, and some carriages of a train plunged into the Gravesend-Higham canal. 3 people were killed and 59 were injured.

The Gem has gone on with its great programme this month. In "Gussy Among the Girls," the runaway swell took shelter at Cliff House. Next week, in "The Runaway at Rookwood," Gussy was taking cover at Jimmy Silver's school. And, finally, in "The Return of the Runaway," Gussy is landed at last, and goes back to St. Jim's to take his gruel. A mighty fine series. Oh, dear, I'm so sorry it's over.

Last of the month in the Gem was "Levison's Past," the start of another new series. The Greyfriars eleven is at St. Jim's for a cricket match - and the rumour gets round St. Jim's that Levison was once expelled from Greyfriars for robbing the Head of that school.

All the Rookwood, Greyfriars, and St. Jim's tales this month have been by the real writer of the stories. He must have been a very busy gentleman. I wonder if he'll get a holiday. He deserves one.

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Nelson Lee Column

I WAS A FUGITIVE FROM THE GHOST OF ST. FRANK'S . . . Or, REFLECTIONS OF A ONE-TIME ST. FRANK'S ADDICT

by Len Wormull

To use a modern idiom, I had it made for me as a youngster. A prized collection of MAGNETS and GEMS was already mine before I came to read them ... a legacy from brothers who had worshipped them. Even my father had given them the 'once-over,' remarking how polished and refined they were to those of his day. That I became the "odd man" out - temporarily, at any rate - was due to one thing: the NELSON LEE had beaten them to it. I was sitting on a gold-mine had I but known it, yet not once during my sojourn with St. Frank's did I feel diposed to stake my claim. Allegiance they call it. Meantime, Frank Richards and Martin Clifford could wait until the fires of E. S. Brooks were extinguished ... or almost.

"Handforth Gets The Sack" (1926) was three years old when I discovered it. I don't know why, but this first incursion into the world of St. Frank's worked wonders with me. Next came the even earlier Ezra Quirke extravaganza to really clinch matters. This feast of sustained spookery still reigns supreme in my book. I became steeped in past history, the years when Edwy Searles Brooks was at his inspired best and in the front rank of boys' writers. The Old Series had a mystique all its own, traces of which spilled over into stories like "St. Frank's On Its Honour," "The Feud Of The Fourth," "The 'Death' Of Church." These were among the highlights of the more attractive 1st New Series. Then to my real inauguration with "The Sneaks' Paradise," a story well up to standard, as was the "School Train" follow-up. A cold wind was blowing, so let me hurriedly sing the praises of the Moor View girls for their warm and refreshing interludes. I have fond memories of "Mutiny" and "The St. Frank's April Fools," among other things.

My exultant entry as a "new boy" was, all unknowingly, destined to be short-lived. The first cold douche came with "Arizona," a bottom-

of-the-barrel excuse to get abroad in search of gold. Sorry, Handy, but the old "one-two" didn't work this time - not with Redskins! "Waldo The Wonder Boy" was another straining at the credulity leash, and one which left me cold. Having lost one of its best (or worst) cads, I suppose it was inevitable that St. Frank's should see a "Return of Bernard Forrest," no matter how ignominious his previous expulsion. How he contrived to do it (and contrived is the operative word), had to be read to be unbelieved. It seems that we young Occidentals couldn't escape from the lurking Peril From The East, the good old countryside was swarming with it. Strange, I was unmoved when "Fu Chang" and his Tong reared their sinister yellow heads. As though sensing a kind of finality, the author rounded off the Series with a story to do it proud. Edgar Fenton's triumph over his scheming uncle was Brooks at his best. Ironically, "The Fellow Who Won" was to launch the reader on a losing battle with criminal elements.

Another week brought the holocaust and the end of a dream. St. Frank's in all its Tudor settings, the pride and joy of readers, burnt to the ground for the sake of a story; its heroes assigned to some idiotic Detective Agency. Who cared if Nelson Lee outwitted the master-mind behind its destruction - my favourite school lay in ruins around me. How I squirmed at this infamy, this madness. But wait - what have we done? Quick, the kiss of life! Sure enough, like an act of atonement, St. Frank's is reborn. Like some Frankenstein monster. And rather like a fading actor falling back on past successes. Enter Quirke for his third, and what was to be his last, appearance. Six years away from his finest hour, now a pitiful case of character disintegration. Let's go again to Northestria. The submarine was different, but even Lee The Lionheart couldn't save this one. After the great fire another flood (how this school suffered!). A mere ripple to the Marooned School of 1927. In monotonous succession came the nightmarish names on the roll of dishonour - K. K. Parkington, Allington Wilkes, Jake Diamond, "Skeets" Bellton, Dr. Scattlebury, Jim Kingswood. Add to all this the uninspired drawings of Kenneth Brookes and the agony was complete. E.S.B. quote: "Yes, I think the Old Paper was more or less on its last legs. It was, of course, editorial policy (again) to delude readers into believing that the Old Paper was at the peak of its popularity.

All editors do that sort of thing when a paper is in bad shape." Demoralised, I sought refuge and comfort in the glory that was St. Frank's. But one cannot live by back numbers alone ...

Zingrave and his zeppelin had won. Only the ghost of St. Frank's remained, real and haunting. I took the escape route open to me via Greyfriars and St. Jim's. No subversive elements here, thank goodness, these schools had a conscience and stability. And now I must confess, unashamedly, that it was our old fat man himself, W. G. B., who made the transition work so smoothly and painlessly. I had never known such laughs (never mind how he got there), and all through Bunter I came to discover the wonderful world of Frank Richards. Not that I ignored Martin Clifford, whose work I enjoyed, but my preference was unmistakable.

One aspect of the change-over which particularly impressed me at the time was the authoritative approach to the tutorship. At Greyfriars and St. Jim's lessons were not only done but seen to be done. Hamilton - to up-date their author - was completely at ease in the classroom, projecting scholarship with a vitalizing force and in a manner befitting Colleges For Further Education. And he did it all in a most delightful way. I had to reflect, sadly, that nothing remotely like it was seen at my old school. There the classrooms were dull and forbidding places, drained of all the fun of work-a-day school life. But then it was not possible to exploit the Curriculum at the expense of the Detective under-current, so we are told. Ah well, just a thought ...

It goes without saying that I am indebted to E. S. Brooks for some wonderful hours of reading. I enjoyed the good times with the Nelson Lee and endured the bad. In graduating to Greyfriars I found a concept of school life more to my liking, a greater love, and a more abiding interest. Truly, I had come home.

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HUMOROUS EPISODES

by R. J. Godsave

One of the fascinating aspects of the Nelson Lee Library was the insertion of a humorous episode, generally unconnected with the theme running throughout the series.

Edward Oswald Handforth, who took everything literally, was often the victim of a jape. Although not really conceited he had faith in his own capabilities, which was not altogether shared by others.

In the New Series of the Lee he was characterised as a somewhat cold and calculating individual, not in keeping with the Handforth the readers of the old series knew.

No. o.s. 565 "The Stolen Play" is a case in point. In this issue half the Lee was devoted to the japing of Handforth, who had boasted that he could see through any disguise and that it was impossible for anyone to pull his leg.

How he and his chums kept an appointment with a firm of solicitors in London who had informed him that a Mr. Handforth, who had recently died in Australia, had left £500,000 to a junior schoolboy who was at an English public school, makes extremely good reading. The solicitor proved to be Nipper, the girl clerk Reggie Pitt, whose disguises Handforth failed to penetrate. On this occasion both Church and McClure were hoaxed together with their leader. Willy Handforth, who had accompanied the chums of study D, was doubtful from the start and recognised Pitt in his disguise.

It seems to me that E. S. Brooks lost a Handforth, who was a natural, just asking for trouble, and gained a Handforth who having shed his naivety was no longer a suitable character for the type of humorous episode that appeared so frequently in the old series.

One wonders at the possible reason for the change. A character modelled on a contemporary of an author's schooldays, with whom contact was maintained throughout the years, would have to be constantly reviewed by the author owing to changes in his personality with the maturity gained with the passing years.

On the other hand, the change could be brought about by the reason of the author's own experiences of life. It is possible that he can see flaws in the character he created and rectifies them.

In the case of Handforth, this theory does not explain the complete reversal of his personality.

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BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

I was sorry to read in the June C. D. of the death of Mr. F. Addington Symonds. He was well known in the book world apart from his writings for the Champion, etc. He wrote a number of Sexton Blake tales in the early 1920's, a set of four appeared in the Union Jack in 1921, featuring a gentleman crook called The Raven and Mdlle Claire Delisle. This lady also appeared in a few stories in the Sexton Blake Library. Readers may be interested to know that in 1957, during one of Herbert Leckenby's visits to London, Len and I went with him to see Mr. Addington Symonds. We spent a pleasant evening with him and I came home with two Champion Annuals which Mr. Symonds autographed and gave to me. Amongst my

pile of old correspondence I found a letter from Herbert dated 7 Sept., 1957, setting out his list of visits amongst which was the one above mentioned, for 17 Sept., 1957. I still have the Champion Annuals which are for 1924 and 1925. The 1924 volume contains a story about Splash Page by Gwyn Evans. The author's name was given, yet did not appear in the U. J. until 1929!!

JOSIE PACKMAN

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SEXTON BLAKE: GOLDEN YEARS OR ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

by Anon.

Gordon Scott, in the February C. D. asked "Did Sexton Blake have a best period" and answered his own question with an emphatic No. He then went on to give his reasons why he considered the Blake character had no bad period, only a persistently good one.

In the same issue of C. D. William Lister, in his article "Sexton Blake and his authors" asks "But how about fiction characters that have to suffer a number of authors, and who has had to suffer this more than Sexton Blake?"

In my opinion this question answers that of Gordon Scott. If the Sexton Blake character had but one author it might be possible to say whether there was a best period or not, but I am going on record to say that some periods were better than others.

This may seem presumptuous for a person who has less than 200 U. J's commencing with No. 1280, dated 28 April, 1928, and going through with gaps, to the final issue, but I hope you will be tolerant.

I also hope Josie will be good enough to add her comments at the end of this article, and give her views on the pre 1928 U. J's of which I am blissfully ignorant. It would I think, be very hard to say that the Union Jack had its Golden Age like some of the other papers, but I think each year had its highlights, and that these were due mainly to the consistently high standards of writing of those authors I term the big three. I refer to G. H. Teed, Gwyn Evans and Robert Murray.

I admit that other authors turned out good yarns but the above named seemed to give Blake that extra something that made him a real living person, to make him the Sexton Blake we have come to love and

respect. Some authors did not do this. Referring to William Lister's article again we find him making this very point. I remember reading a story in which the author repeatedly used the expression "Blake grunted" instead of Blake said. Not once or twice, but throughout the whole story. Now, I ask you, is that typical of the Blake we know?

There are also a number of stories which give the impression that Blake was dragged in by the heels as it were, so that it could qualify as a Sexton Blake story. One such instance is, to my mind: "The Last of the Lynns" by C. Malcolm Hincks, U. J. 1411. Blake is briefly mentioned on page 11 but does not really enter the story until page 13. The story concludes on page 23. The plot was good and in another publication, the omission of Blake would not have been noticed.

You will find it interesting to go through your U. J. collection and note on what page Blake makes his appearance. You may be surprised to note how late in the story this occurs sometimes.

Let us consider the highlights of the Union Jack from 1928 to 1933 based on both individual stories and series which have appealed to me, and also remembering that some stories could be reprints, but which will be treated as new ones. The highlights for 1928 must surely be the Paul Cynos series written by Robert Murray, and the series G. H. Teed wrote about June Severance, both of which, incidentally overlapped into 1929.

The two most outstanding single stories were both by Gwyn Evans. "Who was the Man on the Stairs?," starred Splash Page and had Blake solving a 20 year old murder. The second story was the Xmas issue entitled "The Crime of the Christmas Tree" and featured the League of Robin Hood.

1929 saw Gwyn Evans well to the fore with his Miss Death series (which was dealt with most capably in March C. D.), a cute single called the Great Pyramid Swindle, as well as the Shadow Club series which carried on into 1930, and not forgetting his two-part Xmas story, i.e. "The Mistletoe Milk Mystery" and the "Masque of Time." Rex Hardinge came up with a novel story entitled "The White Hearse Mystery." Early in 1930 Mr. Teed wrote "The Twilight Feather Case," a story featuring Dr. Huxton Rymer and Mary Trent, and, soon after, began that fascinating series which introduced Mlle Roxane, which continued into 1932, which, while quite a long run, never tired the reader and never

outstayed its welcome. Robert Murray wrote two stories featuring The Crime Minister which gave promise of a long and interesting series, but for some reason was never continued. The year ended with the usual Gwyn Evans Xmas treat "The Man who Hated Xmas." 1931 continued to delight with the Roxane series. Gwyn Evans only contributed one story and failed to write an Xmas story for the first time in many years. Just before the year ended Robert Murray wrote the first Criminal Confederation story and the series ran until 1933. 1932 was a year of a number of highlights. Teed's Roxane series was still going strong, Robert Murrays' Criminal Confederation got into its stride and Gwyn Evans introduced us to the League of Onion Men and also wrote the Xmas No. "The Masked Carollers." The Proud Tram series was also published and Rex Hardinge wrote a neat mystery called The War Memorial Murders. Adding up the total from the Big Three we find Robert Murray wrote 11, Teed 10 and Gwyn Evans 7. Taken all round 1932 was a year that would be hard to beat. In 1933, the U.J. had only two months of life left, but the last two stories of the Criminal Confederation appeared and the very last story was by Rex Hardinge called the Land of Lost Men, featuring Losely and Lobangu. A fitting end to the long and glorious run of the Union Jack.

As the author of this article has asked me to add my comments I must do so, although some of them may appear a little caustic. In the first place, those Robert Murray stories were re-hashed fakes. The original stories appeared as far back as 1918, in fact his tales of the Bat (Dirk Dolland) and Mr. Reece began in 1917. If you readers have your Blake catalogues handy just look up the numbers in the 700's and you will find all these stories listed as being written by R. M. Graydon, who of course was Robert Murray. On pages 45 and 46 you will find listed the numbers of the original stories and the re-writes. So that year of 1932 was just faked, as some of Murray's original characters were changed or given new names. The Roxane takes were pale copies of the original Mlle Yvonne adventures which began way back in 1912. Another spurious lot of tales. However, I must not be too hard about this as people who had not read the early U.J's would know nothing about this re-hashing business. The really golden period of the Union Jack, in my opinion, was from 1912 to 1928. One only has to read the Catalogue to see the wonderful array of stories and characters introduced during that period. What about Wu Ling and all the Dr. Huxton Rymer tales?

JOSIE PACKMAN

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THE LOST ERA by S. Gordon Swan

ANY SEXTON BLAKE reprints which we are lucky enough to

get will be inevitably from the larger-type Union Jacks or from the Sexton Blake Library of the 'thirties. But the stories which I ... and doubtless many other long-term adherents of the great detective ... would like to see reprinted belong to what may be termed the Lost Era.

This was the period ranging from late 1917 to the mid-'twenties when a minute type was used in the Sexton Blake Library. Initially this was due to paper shortage in the Great War, but the process was carried on for some years after the Armistice until eventually larger print was used, resulting in shorter stories, for the number of pages was not increased until several years had elapsed.

Some, like myself, may be fortunate enough to possess many of these issues but it is a safe assertion that they have not been re-read for years because of the microscopic proportions of the type. I am sure that a lot of readers would welcome the best of these tales if they were published in print that is easier on the eyes.

During this Lost Era many fine yarns were added to the Sexton Blake Saga and it seems a shame that they should be lost in obscurity. A few were reprinted not long before World War 2, some changed to Ferrers Locke stories in the Boys' Friend Library, but others did not achieve this distinction.

Andrew Murray was responsible for some of the best of these stories. Among those worthy of republication one could mention "The Black Bat," "The Mosque of the Mahdi" ... a fine tale of John Lawless and the war in Palestine ... "The Missing Ships," "The First-Born Son," "The Broken Trail" and "Across the Divide."

Then there was "The Great Abduction Mystery" by W. Murray Graydon. As a rule this author's forte was the adventure or espionage story, but in this particular tale he achieved a mystery which contained a stunning surprise for the reader who had followed the fortunes of the great detective for many years.

The early long Leon Kestrel tales belong to this era, and they have not been surpassed in the long history of Sexton Blake's adventures. Another exceptional story was "The Boy Without a Memory" by John W. Bobin. In this story Tinker received a blow on the head which altered his personality and nullified his moral scruples to such an extent that he rendered assistance to no less a person than the notorious George

Marsden Plummer.

One cannot overlook the contributions of W. J. Bayfield, better known as Allan Blair. "The Clue of the Charred Diary," "The Case of the Bogus Ingots," "The Twist in the Trail," - an exceptionally exciting tale of Ireland - "The Marble Arch Mystery," - this is to quote but a few of his literary efforts.

These are only a handful of the authors and stories which adorned the Lost Era of the small type Sexton Blake Library. I suppose it is wishful thinking to picture some of these in nicely-produced editions with readable print; modern publishers wouln't consider it a commercial proposition to reprint these classic tales. But one may always hope and perhaps someday ...

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REVIEW

PENTELOW CENTENARY BOOKLET

(£1. Cambridge O. B. B. C.)

J. N. Pentelow was born near Cambridge one hundred years ago, and the Cambridge club has put out this book to mark the occasion. A couple of articles, borrowed from past C. D. Annuals, tell the stories of Pentelow's "other schools," concerning which he wrote under the pen-names of Richard Randolph and Jack North. There is also a large selection of views of other people, collected mainly from our own Controversial Echoes column.

There is a reproduction of the story "A Very Gallant Gentleman," and it is assumed that this is evidence of the importance of the Magnet rather than a presentation of Pentelow at his best.

A worthwhile addition to the hobby collection, and a worthy memorial to a man who played an important, if controversial, part in a lengthy period of the history of the Companion Papers. This work is well produced and very moderately priced.

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DO YOU REMEMBER? by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 102 – Magnets 1403-1417 – Hazeldene's Uncle Series

1935 was a year that saw a curious turn of fortunes in the history of the Magnet. 1934 was undoubtedly an annus mirabilis, a year in which all the series were superb and some touched the very heights. Each series was developed in satisfying ways to open up new vistas and produce unexpected turns of events. 1935 saw a perceptible slackening in inspiration, with each number of the series having the same theme as others - someone trying to do something, and not succeeding. It was rather like making a series out of a single story. The series about Hazeldene's uncle is something of a half-way house between the two techniques.

Hazeldene's uncle, John James Hazeldene, was wanted by the police. He was a cashier at the Brighton & County Bank, and the police wanted to interview him in connection with a considerable sum of money missing from the bank, all in £5 notes numbered in sequence. He claimed to be innocent, like Figgins' uncle who fled from a Bristol bank in similar circumstances in blue Gem days. He arrived near the school to seek help from Hazeldene, whose parents were then abroad. Hazeldene was very like his uncle, a broken reed, but Marjorie gallantly came to her uncle's assistance.

The repetitive part of the series concerned John James Hazeldene's narrow escapes from discovery, but the plot did develop as well. Various Greyfriars characters were brought to the fore from week to week, and more importantly a mysterious disguised stranger appeared, passing the stolen notes in the vicinity of Greyfriars. There was thus sufficient variety in the plot construction and narrative technique to carry the series along successfully.

The main interest lay, of course, in the portrayal of the Hazeldene family. Peter Hazeldene, weak, selfish, nervy and touchy, was displayed with such consummate skill that it is possible to suspect that Charles Hamilton was describing someone he really knew, who consoled his pride when borrowing money by asking ungraciously for a favour and then resenting the obligation. There were also many descriptions of the Cliff House scene which provide tantalising glimpses of the way Charles

Hamilton might have developed that school if he had continued to write as Hilda Richards. All in all, the series may be considered an above-average example of Charles Hamilton's later style in the Magnet, always competent, often entertaining and very readable throughout.

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DEATH OF C. H. CHAPMAN

With the death of C. H. Chapman at his home near Reading on 15th July, there are very, very few direct links left with the Companion Papers. Mr. Chapman was 93. Apparently he had ailed but little until the last few months of his life and, indeed, was cycling into his nineties. A wonderful record.

Chapman's work is to be found in A. P. papers of very early in the century, but it was after he joined the Magnet in 1911 that he became really well-known. He is reputed to have been instructed to copy the work of Arthur Clarke, but Chapman made a niche of his own, illustrating the Magnet till its end in 1940, sharing the last twenty years with that great artist Shields.

Chapman had a distinctive style, with a peculiarity for angular types and with schoolboys grinning widely into the drawing board. One felt, at times, that there was a good deal of caricature in his work.

He was closely associated with our clubs over many years, attending meetings on numerous occasions at Wokingham and at Surbiton. A great many of his original sketches, drawn specially for us, have featured in this magazine and its Annual.

It is sad that we have all lost this dear old man. Almost more than anyone except Charles Hamilton, he leaves indelible memories down the corridors of the Companion Papers.

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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 172. THE PROFESSOR AND HIS DAUGHTER

All the time we dig up and rehash old topics, and we chew the cud a lot. The remarkable thing about this hobby of ours is how, from time to time, something new crops up all these many years later.

The latest, and I find it quite startling, comes from Mr. G. R. Samways, who was probably the most famous of all the substitute writers.

Some time ago Mr. Bill Lofts had a book published under the title "The Men Behind Boys' Fiction," in which he referred to the work of Mr. Samways. As a result of this book, Mr. Samways wrote to Mr. Lofts who has kindly passed on the letter to me.

The following is an extract from Mr. Samways' letter:

"May I point out that I was never at any time in collaboration with J. N. Pentelow, and there should have been no confusion regarding the authorship of some of the war-time stories. What happened, I think, was this: I wrote and submitted the stories, while serving in the R. F.C., and Pentelow drastically 'edited' a few of them. He then made out the paysheet on a 50/50 basis - half to himself and half to me. Actually, Pentelow thought too meanly of my work, whilst Hinton thought too highly of it. I was very young at that time, and lacked the experience of story-craft.

"It was stated that Stanley Austin was the only substitute writer to be entrusted with a series. May I point out that the characters of Professor John Rivers and Marie Rivers were created by me, and plots centring around them were evolved by me and supplied to Charles Hamilton. Moreover, a series of the Talbot/Marie Rivers stories was actually written by me, as your researches in the Gem archives should have shown. (I'm not making an issue of this, but thought it only fair to myself to bring it to your notice.)"

Those few lines from Mr. Samways' letter contain several points of interest. There were, undoubtedly, a great many substitute series, so it is not clear why Mr. Lofts should have said that Austin was the only sub writer to be entrusted with a series - if he actually said this.

I have no hesitation at all in accepting Mr. Samways' claim that he evolved plots which were supplied to Charles Hamilton. I have long thought it obvious that a writer with an enormous regular output like that of Hamilton must have been supplied with some plot outlines, otherwise his prodigious feats would have been quite impossible. I do not regard this as important. I have always stressed the point that the way a story was told was of far more importance than the plot.

What I find quite startling is Mr. Samways' claim to have been the creator of the Professor and Marie Rivers. Plenty of people have placed these as among the most striking and successful of the Hamilton character works.

I, personally, never cared a lot for the Talbot tales. Talbot was introduced just as the 1914 war broke out, and during the next twelve months or so Mr. Hamilton overplayed him. There was far too much Talbot for a long time. He overshadowed Tom Merry, and his friendship with Tom upset the balance of the Terrible Three, though Hamilton never recognised that factor or gave us what could have been a worthwhile tale on the theme. After that, the substitute writers - and, I think, mainly Mr. Samways - plugged Talbot and his past to the point of boredom. In later years, Hamilton largely dropped Talbot, apart from an occasional tale on the old hackneyed theme of Talbot's past.

My own indifference to Talbot, however, is unimportant. There was, in Gem circles, a large sect devoted to Talbot and his circle, and in this group of Talbot fans were the late Len Packman and Mrs. Josie Packman. What always puzzled me a little about some Talbot fans was that they seemed just as devoted to the substitute Talbot tales as they were to the genuine ones.

Professor John Rivers first appeared in "Talbot's Triumph" in the autumn of 1914 (he turned up as Mr. Packington, a science master at St. Jim's), and Marie Rivers made her debut in a series which commenced a few weeks later with "The Call of the Past." These were all very fine stories, unquestionably Hamiltonian, and in fact, usually counted among the Hamilton "greats." (Of course, a junior schoolboy was too young to have a "past." The older Lancaster was far more credible in the later Magnet, even though, as time went on in the Gem, Talbot was described as "one of the oldest fellows in the Shell.")

From Mr. Samways' letter, it seems that he claims to have invented the names of the Professor and Marie Rivers as well as the characters. If this is indeed so, it is most surprising. One would have thought that Hamilton, obviously seeing possibilities in the characters, would at least have given them his own names when introducing them into the Talbot story. Samways must have been fairly young in 1914, even though his "Sunday Crusaders" appeared in the Magnet only about a year later.

I find just a little touching Mr. Samways' reminiscence when he admits that "Hinton thought too highly of him while Pentelow had too mean an opinion of his work." Certainly, it has seemed likely that Hinton rushed Samways into print too early, and probably spoiled the budding young writer. Yet Hinton was Hamilton's friend, and can hardly be suspected of having sinister intentions.

It may seem to some that Pentelow's 50/50 scheme was something like sharp practice, though it was not necessarily so. In comparatively recent times I have heard of an author's story being turned over to a reviser, who pockets half the cheque in return for his work. In some cases, no doubt, the reviser has plenty of work to do on a manuscript, and earns his money. All the same, it clearly does leave a gate open for the cheating of less well-known writers.

Concerning the Samways letter, I think that many readers will be as startled as I was about the Professor and Marie River.

* *

W A N T E D : Bullseye, Surprise (1-25), Film Fun, Boys' Magazine, 1931-34. Buy/exchange Bullseye, Magnet, SOL, Thompsons, Lees (OS). Also state wants.
SUTTON, 41 SWALECLIFF AVE., MANCHESTER M23 9DN.

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WANTED: Greyfriars Holiday Annuals. 1920,1923,1928, in decent condition, a good price paid. N. C. RAVENSCROFT, 5 DARLINGTON ROAD, LONGROCK, PENZANCE, CORNWALL.

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F O R S A L E : Gem facsimiles. Vol. No. 1 "D'Arcy the Runaway" £1 + 20p postage; Vol. No. 2 "Cardew of St. Jim's" £1.50 + 20p postage; also Nelson Lee Vol. No. 1 "The Barring-Out at St. Frank's" £1.50 + 20p postage.
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WANTED: Detective Library, Nugget Weekly and Nelson Lee Library, containing stories of Jim The Penman, The Green Triangle and The Black Wolf. Also B.F.L. 649, 656, 657.

R. BLYTHE, 47 EVELYN AVE., KINGSBURY, LONDON NW9 0JF.

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The Postman Called

(Interesting items from the Editor's letter-bag)

G. W. MASON (Torquay): I do not consider "The Mysterious 'X'" a classic example of the work of Charles Hamilton. Both Kerr and Wildrake, in subsequent yarns, were far more interesting characters than Ferrers Locke, and subject to stronger plots. A hacked oil painting, as depicted in the illustration, would be greatly diminished in value. Our old friend, Inspector Skeat, was weakly portrayed. I think I would have preferred "Cousin Ethel's Schooldays."

J. T. ROBYNS (Hayle): One of the most touching things pertaining to Frank Richards:-

I met a young man (this was years back of course) who served in the War and was taken prisoner by the Japs. Due to lack of food and malnutrition, he became totally blind. In his youth, apparently, he was a Greyfriars 'fan' and in one of my letters to Frank Richards I mentioned this. I was absolutely astonished at Frank Richards' immediate interest. He requested from me, the blind man's name and address and went to tremendous care and trouble to write him a letter in Braile.

This, Frank Richards accomplished by pricking the writing paper with a pin or similar sharp pointed implement.

The recipient was terribly thrilled and I was so touched by Frank Richards kindness, for he was then elderly and it must have been a terrific strain.

BILL LOFTS (London): In answer to S. Gordon Swan, Yes or No is very scarce indeed, and only a few copies are known to be in existence. The British Museum copies were destroyed by fire during the last war. I would dearly love to peruse the files of any that turn up. Apart from Edgar Wallace, Sax Rohmer probably wrote as well in its pages. Lucky Bob Blythe picked up a few odd copies some years ago, which had the very first E. S. Brooks stories ever written I believe. Weekly Tell Teller is much more easy to obtain and I have perused complete files of them in research. Bulldog Breed Library ran for only 10 issues - and is the least collected I would say of all the old boys papers.

R. J. McCABE (Dundee): Once again I tender my thanks for the great pleasure obtained from C.D. and the start of the month is eagerly looked forward to. I enjoy Danny's Diary very much and would like another serial to appear.

H. MACHIN (Preston): How compellingly nostalgic are your engrossing editorials. I was at St. Mary's Training College, Hammersmith, in 1924. As often as I could afford, I spent the after-dinner break at Lyons. I had the choice of quite a few Lyons' cafés:- Hammersmith Broadway, Cadby Hall or Shepherd's Bush. A pot of tea and two toasted crumpets for 5½d. Those were the days.

N. C. RAVENSCROFT (Penzance): There is one article of interest to me more than others this month, and that is the "Two Old Periodicals" by Mr. Swan. I was fortunate enough some months ago to pick up 60 issues of "Yes and No," a rather lurid paperback covered periodical, but the interesting point is that underneath the title "Yes and No" was the smaller title "Weekly Tale-Teller;" so it would appear that the two papers were one. Whether there had ever been two different papers I would not know, but from Mr. Swan's article he has actually handled both papers, so it must be assumed that eventually the two periodicals combined.

"Garnett Bell, Detective" appeared in the early issues of "Yes and No;" the Author being Maurice Everard; who really was Mr. Cecil Henry Bullivant the Author of many novels of the early 1900's, "Mysteries of Myra;" "The Strong Man's way;" "The Dancing Spy" being some of his best mystery novels.

C. H. Bullivant's "Garnett Bell" short novels were collected into book form by Odhams in 1920, and published in a cheap war time book, poor paper, and poor coverings. This book is very rare now, and it is a collectors' item. No doubt the Editor of the Boys' Friend in 1915 was referring to C. H. Bullivants novels when he mentioned that Bullivant (Everard) "had worked in a higher sphere."

JACK OVERHILL (Cambridge): After 54 years I've just read again "A Very Gallant Gentleman" in the Cambridge O. B. B. C. Pentelow Memoir. What a lot of roughly written rubbish.

I've lately learned that Pentelow wrote "Goggs Grammarian" and "The Twins From Tasmania" that appeared as serials in the GEM during the first world war. They contributed towards my giving up the GEM at the time! The GEM got bad enough without them!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Many of us have nightmarish recollections of Goggs and those Tasmanian twins.)

JIM COOK (New Zealand): I must associate myself with Bob Blythe in upholding the good name of the creator of St. Frank's.

I knew Brooks personally; was in contact with him for over thirty years and cannot even imagine him "cringing before domineering editors." In fact, I could better visualise editors cringing before him!

It would be entirely out of character for Edwy Searles Brooks to cringe before any-one. His was a powerful personality and this force was seen in the St. Frank's stories that made him so famous.

I do not ask you to retract your statements about Brooks since we are all entitled to our opinion, but I feel sure you did not mean to be so harsh in your condemnation of one of our most popular authors in our hobby.

LAURIE SUTTON (Orpington): Isn't it possible that Pentelow was part saint and part sinner? Some people's characters appear differently to various people according to their relationship. I have known people who are kind and sentimental, yet can have a bitter and cruel tongue in certain situations.

Pentelow's "Greyfriars Gallery" No. 43 (Mossoo) does not help the pro-P's when, referring to juniors looking down on Mossoo because he is French and they are English, he writes: "Why, there are Hottentots better than Skinner, Chinese superior to Bolsover and Australian aborigines - you cannot go much lower than that - who would compare favourably with Snoop." Game, set, and match to Miss Goolagong!

Philip Tierney recalls the "murder" of characters by Hamilton, Pentelow and Samways (incidentally, the 1962 C. D. Annual lists unjustly find Pentelow guilty of Samways' "crime" - Bobbie Severn's death in Magnet 813). Actually, it is pretty certain that Bolsover minor nearly went the way of Bulstrode minor in Magnet 210, "Bolsover Minor's Last Sacrifice." It would seem that the end of this story was altered, but the

title carelessly retained. All the ingredients for the death scene are there, and, indeed, without it the title does not make sense.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Pentelow's remarks, quoted above, were made over 50 years ago. Circumstances have changed greatly during that period of time. One does not have to be pro-Pentelow to ask for fair play for the man.)

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News of the Clubs

CAMBRIDGE

Bob Blythe of the London Old Boys' Book Club, and the leading authority on Edwy Searles Brooks, delighted members with a display from his collection.

Mr. Blythe, who visited Cambridge with his wife, Louise, said that his interest in old boys' books went back to the 1920's, when he bought the first Nelson Lee.

At the age of 18, he resolved to go and see Brooks, who was polite and enthusiastic, and he met the writer several times before his death.

Members drooled with envy as Mr. Blythe described how he and the late Len Packman were subsequently invited to rootle through Brooks' own collection.

Sexton Blake was voted the most popular character in boys' fiction after a lively debate in which Deryck Harvey proposed Blake, Danny Posner nominated Billy Bunter, Bill Thurbon his own favourites, Jack, Sam and Pete, and Harold Forecast, Captain Justice.

A Cambridge magistrate, Brian Payne, attended his first meeting. He is a "Film Fun" and "Radio Fun" collector.

A feature by Mr. Posner on Cambridge writers who have worked for boys' story-papers over the years is included in the June issue of a monthly "glossy," "Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough Life."

The club are planning to hold their next meeting at Dick Turpin's birthplace, a public-house, "The Rose and Crown," at Hempstead, 18 miles from Cambridge, on 9 July.

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NORTHERN

Meeting on Saturday, 8 July.

Chairman Geoffrey Wilde opened the meeting with his accustomed brand of sportive and sporting remarks, deploring the inclement weather which had resulted in the cancellation of the day's tennis and cricket fixtures.

Lively discussion ranged over the Pentelow Booklet and the Howard Baker volumes. We were puzzled, however, at the inclusion of Magnet 1599 in the forthcoming volume, 'The Greyfriars Adventurers.' This would imply that we were not going to get the Tracy Series (1599-1608).

In spite of criticisms which we felt we had to make, we were nevertheless grateful to Howard Baker for his noble venture.

The speaker of the evening was Geoffrey Wilde, whose subject was, 'How my collection started.'

During a long illness as a boy, Geoffrey said, he had read everything in the house (and one may assume that his father's library was extensive) when his father brought home for him a red and blue paper - 'Fatty Wynn's Thin Time' (Gem 1356).

Geoffrey confessed to being fascinated by the world which this paper opened up to him. There followed soon a blue and orange paper. Yes, you're right, of course it was!

Geoffrey's collection does make many of us turn green with envy and we can't help wishing that we, too, had had a long illness when we were boys (or girls). Who knows what might have turned up!

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LONDON

On 16 July, 24 stalwarts turned up at the Richmond Community Centre despite the siren song of blue skies and glorious sunshine. Uncle Ben was on holiday. Don Webster proved himself in fine form with one of his amusing quizzes where the clues were imaginative phrases relating to characters' names. Would you believe, "Quick, give us a song," was Hurree Singh? Bill Lofts beat all with 13 out of 16. Next were Roger Jenkins and Eric Lawrence with 8 apiece. As the character she finds

impossible to like at all, Winnie Morse gave us internal evidence from the stories showing what a gutless, craven creature is Peter Hazeldene. She followed this with a reading from a 1929 Magnet which brought out the good qualities of a character she likes very much - Mark Linley. Bill Lofts displayed the Cambridge Club's tribute to J. N. Pentelow. This looks a fine production and Bill has promised to bring more copies to the next meeting. Flushed with hot tea, we settled down for a rare treat from Marjorie Norris' recorded library of two tapes she made with Edwy Searles Brooks wherein he supplied all manner of fascinating material about his early writing days, the invaluable aid he received from his wife, Frances, the discipline of having to write a new St. Frank's story every week, and his later work in the hardback field as Victor Gunn and Berkeley Grey. Mr. Brooks' throaty chuckle and the scratch of his matches as he relit his pipe accompanied this lively glimpse into the endeavours of a hard-working and successful writer. Mr. Brooks' bluff, cheerful delivery then lead to a discussion as to whether the word cringing could really be applied to him. Dogged perseverance was suggested as being the more appropriate description. The comparison with Charles Hamilton was hardly apropos because Hamilton as an established writer in his middle years was being compared with a young man just starting his career who was merely taking note of what people told him while he was learning his craft. Aspiration was also put forth in lieu of cringing. Next get-together will be at Friardale, 2 North Drive, Ruislip; phone 71-31025.

RAY HOPKINS

Sub-Scribe.

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G. NEWMAN, 37 MOOR ST., HEREFORD.

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WANTED: Monster Libraries, School Boys' Own Libraries, Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, all years. Rovers, Wizards, Adventures, Hotspurs, Champions, Adventure Lands, most childrens and boys annuals.

JAMES GALL, 49 ANDERSON AVENUE, ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND.

Tel. 491716

CHEERY CHICKS

by W. O. G. Lofts

The Cheery Chicks publications, which appeared in post-war years, were certainly far more unusual than the average juvenile papers. To start with, they were edited by Barbara - a fourteen year old school-girl, who claimed to be the youngest professional editress of any magazine and most of the contributions were by juniors. Another strange factor, was that although starting out as a Children's Newspaper Magazine, it seemingly finished up as a comic!

Cheery Chicks first appeared in December, 1946, priced 9d, and was approx. the size of the large Nelson type. It was published by Aida Reubens of Goodmayes, Ilford - who was not only the business manager, but I suspect the driving force behind it. It was also

printed at the works of the Ilford Guardian. Its cover showed Barbara (her surname was never revealed) a pleasant looking girl sitting at her desk reading manuscripts, and inside it revealed that she also played and sang at the piano, as well as being an efficient typist. The magazine comprised short stories, puzzles, comic sketches, picture strips and a weekly message from the Rev. Fred Smith of St. Alban's Church, Dagenham - who was formerly Chaplain to Field Marshall Lord Alexander. Letters also appeared from famous child stars to Barbara including one from 'Just William' (John Clark) who also gave the most fascinating information that he first started his career in the Will Hay programme as D'Arcy! Barbara also later met Tornado Smith the ace-rider of the Wall of Death at Southend Kursaal, who died a few years ago, and whom the writer talked to many times on daily trips to the London sea-side resort. Barbara also appeared on Television at Alexandra Palace discussing her magazine - which later had interesting articles by Gladys Spratt, former editress of The Girls Own Paper, and messages of good-will from Childrens Newspaper/Amalgamated Press, and other publishing firms. Pathe Pictorial No. 128 featured Barbara, and she obviously was quite a celebrity at this period.

In June, 1947, Cheery Chicks changed format to a comic and No. 1, 10 x 12 was priced only 4d - almost half the price. Its front cover had a comic strip about a Giraffe and his long neck. The artist was Dennis Childs, who was a Sunday School teacher, aged 20. The August, 1947, issue was much smaller in size and entitled Cheery Chicks Chummy Comic, and its editorial said quite plainly that they wanted a million readers, despite the fact that copies were limited because of the strict paper control. The British Museum copies are incomplete but the paper probably petered out towards the end of the year, as no references to it are to be found in the 1948 Press Guides. Cheery Chicks was obviously well circulated, as letters from all over the world were quoted in its pages from readers and it was distributed by Gordon & Gotch. Whether Barbara did in adult years become a professional journalist, it would be interesting to learn, or whether she became just a housewife. Probably an interesting job for research and a follow up article!

SPECIAL NOTE:

There is an obvious difference in dates given here, from those published

in the OLD BOYS BOOKS CATALOGUE. The latter dates were given in good faith by a collector - but obviously he was misinformed and incorrect.

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REVIEW

THE UNION JACK OMNIBUS (£2.75. Howard Baker Pres

This splendid book must be the event of the year. Collectors' Digest has long advocated a reprint of Union Jacks (the paper had a large following in its day), and this one really makes a pleasant change from so many Greyfriars reprints.

The volume actually contains 5 Union Jacks plus the first issue of Detective Library. All the Jacks are from the closing year of the paper, a time when the presentation was inclined to be untidy. The stories are first-class, and should offer a wide appeal to those who enjoy thrillers. E. S. Brooks, who can always be relied upon for a well-knit and well-told detective tale, will not disappoint his vast number of admirers with his "House of Light," introducing the famous Brooksian character, Waldo.

Robert Murray is featured twice in the bill, in the last two tales of the sinister Mr. Reece, of the Shadow, and of the ever-popular Criminals' Federation. The C.C. stories were many and among the most popular of anything that the Union Jack offered.

There are people who can argue convincingly that Gwyn Evans was the star among Blake writers. Whether that is so or not, his story of the Onion Men, introducing the newspaper reporter, Splash Page, is a

winner. A good contrast is provided by a typical Rex Hardinge novel, set in Africa. This tale has the distinction of being the last Union Jack story. The editor announced that the Union Jack becomes Detective Weekly - better, bigger, improved in a dozen ways. It wasn't, of course. It was editorial claptrap.

Finally, in Detective Weekly No. 1, Lewis Jackson, once famed for his far better Kestrel stories, introduced Sexton Blake's Secret, which was a wayward brother, Nigel.

Great though this volume is, and deserving every support, it is not beyond criticism. The selection of some of the stories seems sadly unimaginative. It must remain a mystery why the Detective Weekly was chosen to feature in such an omnibus. D. W. was of larger measurements than the U. J. The cover was printed on mustard-coloured paper. This reprint is reduced in size, which means that the print becomes small for some older people who are expected to buy the book. It is now given a white cover, and the whole thing is quite unreal.

Added to this, the Nigel Blake story was just the first of a series, and the theme is left in the air. Unsatisfactory.

The choice of the final two Confederation tales is also a doubtful one. Why not the first two? In fact, the U. J. of a few years earlier would, in my view, have been preferable to start with.

With those thoughts out of my system, I repeat that this is a splendid book, full of charm, and with masses of fine reading. And, of course, there is plenty to read in addition to the six star stories.

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THEM WAS THE DAYS (Not half!)

Mr. R. Taylor of Wolverhampton writes: As a boy I read the Boys' Friend, Herald, Realm and the Jester. My favourite tales were school stories and adventure yarns, and, believe me, there were plenty of them. All the old authors come to my mind - Henry St. John, Sidney Drew, Cecil Hayter, Charles Hamilton, Allan Blair and hosts of others.

I had a second-hand stall in Bilston Market, and I used to sell bundles of boys' papers and comics for 3d. Bound volumes of Captain, Scout, Young England, Stand and Windor went for 6d.each. Not to mention big fat volumes of B. O. P., and Chums for 9d.each. If I had them today, I could nearly make myself a millionaire.

Edited by Eric Fayne, Excelsior House, 113 Crookham Road, Crookham, Nr. Aldershot, Hants.
Litho-duplicated by York Duplicating Services, 12a The Shambles, York.